



# *New York State Archives*

## **New York State Comptroller's Office Abstracts, Check Rolls, and Vouchers for Canal Expenditures A0013**

---

New York State Archives  
222 Madison Avenue  
Albany, NY 12230  
[archref@nysed.gov](mailto:archref@nysed.gov)  
URL: <http://www.archives.nysed.gov/>

---

## Table of Contents

---

Overview of the Records .....	3
Arrangement .....	3
Administrative History .....	3
Scope and Contents .....	4
Related Information .....	5
Other Finding Aids .....	5
Use of Records .....	6
Access Terms .....	6

## Overview of the Records

---

<b>Repository:</b>	New York State Archives
<b>Summary:</b>	These monthly and bi-monthly abstracts, check rolls, and vouchers were submitted to the Canal Commissioners by Superintendents of Repairs. Arranged by canal starting with Erie, then chronologically by year, and alphabetical by name of Superintendent of Repairs, the records provide detailed information on labor performed (including laborers' names and wages) and expenditures on construction or repair projects on the Erie, Champlain, Oswego, Cayuga and Seneca, Chemung, Crooked Lake, Chenango, Genesee Valley, and Black River canals.
<b>Creator:</b>	New York (State). Comptroller's Office
<b>Title:</b>	Abstracts, check rolls, and vouchers for canal expenditures
<b>Quantity:</b>	248.5 cubic feet
<b>Inclusive Date:</b>	1827-1880
<b>Series:</b>	A0013

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

---

## Arrangement

---

Arranged by canal, starting with the Erie, then by calendar or fiscal year, then alphabetically by name of superintendent.

A0013-95: Chronological by year and therein by superintendent.

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

---

## Administrative History

---

The office of Superintendent of Canal Repairs was established pursuant to Laws of 1826, Chap. 361, and its duties were specified in Laws of 1827, Chap. 224, as amended by Laws of 1847, Chap. 100, Laws of 1851, Chap. 57, and Laws of 1853, Chap. 52. Laws of 1827, Chap. 224, required the superintendent to render accounts to the Comptroller once every sixty

days. The fiscal year began on Sept. 1, pursuant to Laws of 1830, Chap. 320. (Previously the abstracts and vouchers are bundled by calendar year.)

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

---

## Scope and Content Note

---

This series consists of "check rolls" (summaries of payrolls), other vouchers, and summary abstracts of expenditures assembled by canal superintendents of repairs and submitted to the Canal Commissioner for approval, and by that officer to the Comptroller for audit. The workers whose time and pay were recorded in these records were state employees who maintained, repaired, and operated the Erie Canal and the branch canals. Most of those workers were seasonal laborers who worked in the warmer months of the year. The series contains no information on workers employed by private contractors whom the state engaged to construct or enlarge canal sections or structures.

The superintendent of repairs on each section of the Erie Canal and branch canals prepared monthly or bi-monthly abstracts of expenditures and submitted them with original vouchers to the Canal Commissioners. The principal voucher is called the "check roll," made out by the foreman in charge of a particular repair work. The check roll lists the name of each laborer employed, his pay voucher number, number of days worked in past month, rate of pay per day, and amount of pay due. The check roll also contains a brief description of the work done under that foreman (e.g. repairing tow path, breaking stone, etc.). At the bottom of the roll is the signed affidavit of the foreman that the information is correct. Accompanying the check roll are vouchers for materials (lumber, stone, gravel, etc.) and extra labor (e.g. teams for hauling). The check roll is itself a voucher and is numbered in a series along with the other simpler vouchers.

All the vouchers are entered in numerical order in the abstract of expenditures prepared by the superintendent of repairs. The abstract gives for each voucher the name of payee, nature of expenditure, amount of payment in various categories (check rolls, lock tending, labor, materials, merchants' and mechanics' bills, miscellaneous). At the end are totals and balances of the figures, the superintendent's affidavit attesting to the accuracy of the report, and the Canal Commissioner's certificate that the expenditures were "proper and reasonable." On the dorso of the abstract are written the name of the superintendent, the period of time covered in the abstract, the total amounts of money disbursed by him and due him for his salary, and dates of receipt and audit by the Comptroller's office.

Sometimes all the abstracts, check rolls, and vouchers of a particular superintendent for a whole year are bundled together. More often they are contained in two or more bundles, labeled "No. 1," "No. 2," etc. The original wrapper, when present, has written on it the superintendent's name, canal, and period of time. The content and format of the records in this series changed very little over the span of fifty years.

Abstracts, check rolls, and vouchers are available for the following canals and time periods: Erie, 1828-1878; Champlain, 1828-1878; Oswego, 1827-1877; Cayuga and Seneca,

1829-1876; Chemung, 1832-1877; Crooked Lake, 1839-1875; Chenango, 1836-1877; Genesee Valley, 1839-1876; and Black River, 1851-1877. In the last box are ten small time books for labor, various dates, presented to the Comptroller for audit as part or in place of a check roll.

A0013-95: The bulk of the accretion consists of vouchers maintained by various superintendents of the Crooked Lake Canal. Also included is a small amount of estimates for contract work on the canal. Under canal law statements of necessary expenditures were required to be filed with commissioners of the canal fund by the canal commissioner. Vouchers (1834-1849 with gaps) are grouped under the superintendents' names. Estimates by various superintendents are dated throughout the 1840s and include itemized statements of costs and materials for construction work.

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

---

## Related Information

---

### Related Material

B1846Series B1846, Card index to abstracts, check rolls, and vouchers for canal expenditures, indexes this series

B0921Series B0921, Abstracts and vouchers for Barge Canal and canal terminal expenses and

B0605Series B0605, Requisitions for Barge Canal materials and equipment, contain related records.

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

---

## Other Finding Aids

---

### Available at Repository

Box numbers for the records in this series can be found in the upper left corner of each index card in Series B1846, Card index to abstracts, check rolls, and vouchers for canal expenditures.

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

## Use of Records

---

### Access Restrictions

There are no restrictions regarding access to or use of the material.

---

## Access Terms

---

- Accounting
- Estimates
- Administering canals
- New York (State)
- New York State Barge Canal System (N.Y.)
- Maintaining infrastructure
- Canals--Economic aspects--New York (State)
- Canals--Administration
- Canals--New York (State)--Finance
- Vouchers (sales records)
- Sherland, William H.
- Benham, Miles
- Page, Erastus
- Young, James
- Durfey, John
- New York (State). Department of Audit and Control
- Babcock, John C.